

Message Text

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14

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 AGR-20 EB-11 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15

USIA-15 AID-20 OMB-01 COME-00 RSR-01 /134 W

----- 007852

R 031500Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5968

INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY

AMCONSUL CALCUTTA

AMCONSUL MADRAS

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE NEW DELHI 9016

TAGS: PINS, PINT, IN

E.O. 11652: N/A

SUBJ: FOOD GRAIN PRICES AND SCARCITY SPUR URBAN DEMONSTRATIONS

1. IN BOMBAY JULY 31 OPPOSITION SHIV SENA MILITANTS FORCED RETAILERS TO SELL FOOD GRAINS, COOKING OIL, AND SUGAR TO CONSUMERS AT SHARPLY REDUCED PRICES. LOCAL POLICE FIRED FIRST TEAR GAS THEN BULLETS, KILLING ONE DEMONSTRATOR. FOLLOWING PROTEST CLOSURE BY PRIVATE RETAIL GRAIN DEALERS, MAHARASHTRA CHIEF MINISTER NAIK ANNOUNCED DECISION TO FIX PRICES OF ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES AND ENSURE SALE AT THOSE PRICES. SHIV SENA THEN HALTED ITS ANTI-PRICE RISE ACTIVITY IN BOMBAY. SIMILAR ACTIVITY AND DENOUEMENT WERE REPORTED FROM NEARBY POONA. POPULAR RESENTMENT OVER GOVERNMENT'S FAILURE TO CHECK PRICE RISES IS CLEARLY GROWING; PRO-MOSCOW COMMUNISTS (CPI) AND EVEN BOMBAY CONGRESS PRESIDENT PATEL ADMONISHED NAIK TO KEEP HIS PROMISES.

2. RISING RICE PRICES AND REDUCED RICE RATIONS WERE SUBJECT OF STATEWIDE BANDH (STRIKE AND COMMERCIAL/TRANSPORT CLOSE-DOWN) IN KERALA AUGUST 2. BANDH WAS ORGANIZED BY LEFT COMMUNISTS (CPM), DISSIDENT KERALA CONGRESS, AND THREE OTHER MINOR OPPOSITION PARTIES. IT WAS SUCCESSFUL IN FOUR AREAS WHERE THESE

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TION PARTIES. IT WAS SUCCESSFUL IN FOUR AREAS WHERE THESE

OPPOSITION PARTIES ARE STRONG.

THREE FATALITIES WERE REPORTED, TWO FROM POLICE FIRING. POLICE
COUNTER MEASURES DAMPENED EFFECTS OF BANDH. STATE GOVERNMENT
ORDERED SCHOOLS CLOSED FOR THE REST OF THE WEEK BUT DOES NOT
EXPECT FURTHER AGITATION OR VIOLENCE.

3. FOREGOING BASED ON REPORTS FROM CONGENS BOMBAY AND MADRAS.

MOYNIHAN

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Message Attributes

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